

Delaware's Behavioral Health Consortium selected to partner with The Pew Charitable Trusts

Delaware selected as one of only two states in the nation to participate

New Castle, Del. – On Tuesday, Lt. Governor Hall-Long joined members of Delaware's Behavioral Health Consortium and members of The Pew Charitable Trusts to announce a newly formed partnership that will work to reshape Delaware's behavioral health treatment system for those struggling with addiction and mental illness. Delaware is one of only 2 states nationwide that will partner with Pew to assess the treatment system, work to close the gaps, and create a more unified statewide continuum of care for those in need.

"We are dealing with one of the most severe public health epidemics in generations." said **Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long**. "We need an all hands on deck approach to fight back and save lives. This partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts will allow Delaware to leverage critical resources and experience to develop a treatment system that works for all Delawareans."

Over the next several months, Pew will work closely with the Behavioral Health Consortium, chaired by Lt. Governor Hall-Long, in coordination with state agency leaders, elected officials, and key stakeholders to identify gaps across the treatment system, and develop strategic solutions and policies to tackle the opioid epidemic.

"Opioid use disorder is a public health crisis and a complex brain disease, but it can be managed effectively with

evidence-based treatment,” said **Pew’s senior director of health programs Allan Coukell**. “Pew looks forward to partnering with Delaware’s Behavioral Health Consortium, under the leadership of Lt. Gov. Hall-Long, and the Delaware General Assembly to address opioid use disorder in the state and help get more Delaware residents the treatment they need.”

In 2017, Delaware experienced 345 overdose deaths, which is a 12 percent increase from the previous year. Over 29,000 Delawareans suffer from a serious mental illness.

“Pew’s expertise and leadership will be critical to reviewing and analyzing best practices and strategies around claims, insurance payment systems, and other forms of reimbursement in Delaware to ensure anyone who needs treatment can get it,” said **Elizabeth Romero, Director of Delaware’s Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health**.

The Pew Charitable Trusts, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and public policy organization, will partner with Delaware to develop recommendations to strengthen the treatment system and provide timely access to comprehensive, evidence-based care for substance use disorders. Pew supports the development of state and federal policies that reduce the inappropriate use of prescription opioids and expand access to effective treatment.

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